

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 113370

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 12)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS-

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO ISRAELI-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREE-
MENT WHITE HOUSE PASS SAM 96970

1. FOLLOWING IS INR ROUNDUP OF REACTIONS TO DISENGAGEMENT
AGREEMENT FROM USSR, WESTERN EUROPE, AND ARAB STATES,
AVAILABLE AS OF 1030 EDT:

2. USSR: AN HOUR AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT, A BRIEF TASS
ITEM STATED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD ANNOUNCED THAT "AN
UNDERSTANDING WAS ACHIEVED ABOUT DISENGAGEMENT." THE
SYRIAN-SOVIET STATEMENT ISSUED AT THE TIME OF GROMYKO'S
DEPARTURE FROM DAMASCUS PLAYED DOWN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
AGREEMENT, REPEATING SYRIA'S POSITION THAT DISENGAGEMENT
IS MERELY A "FIRST AND INSEPARABLE PART OF AN OVERALL
SETTLEMENT." IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT
OF THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT A MOSCOW BROADCAST IN ARABIC
OF MAY 28 SAID THAT EFFORTS TO REACH A SYRIAN-ISRAELI
AGREEMENT WERE "WITHOUT DOUBT, INITIAL POSITIVE STEPS
TOWARD A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, BUT NO MORE." MOSCOW
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TASS IN ENGLISH, FROM DAMASCUS, MAY 30, EMPHASIZED THAT THE

DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WAS "NOT A PEACE AGREEMENT" BUT ONLY "A STEP TOWARD A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE ON THE BASIS OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 338."

3. BRITAIN: A FOREIGN OFFICE STATEMENT WARMLY WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT AND ADDED: "WE SALUTE DR. KISSINGER WHOSE UNREMITTING EFFORTS HAVE DONE SO MUCH TO BRING IT ABOUT."

4. ITALY: THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT. ACCORDING TO REUTER, FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES SAID THAT ITALY WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP BRING ABOUT CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SECURITY AND FRUITFUL COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

5. WEST GERMANY: FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER CALLED THE AGREEMENT "AN IMPORTANT AND MOST WELCOME STEP ON THE ROAD TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST." HE PRAISED THE "DIPLOMATIC ABILITY AND INDEFATIGABLE EFFORTS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER" AND TERMED THE ACCORD "AN INDISPENSABLE PRECONDITION FOR A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE SETTLEMENT FOR ALL PEOPLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST."

6. SYRIA: DAMASCUS RADIO ENDED ITS BROADCAST DAY ON MAY 29 WITHOUT CARRYING ANY SYRIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT- IN ITS PLACE, A JOINT SYRIAN-SOVIET STATEMENT WAS BROADCAST, WHICH CALLED FOR COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, AND AN OVERALL MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, ENSURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTIONS. A LATER BROADCAST MERELY CITED PRESIDENT NIXON'S ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WHITE HOUSE- DAMASCUS PAPERS ON MAY 30 PUBLISHED THE AGREEMENT TEXT, STRESSING THAT THE AGREEMENT IS NOT A PEACE AGREEMENT, BUT ONLY A STEP TOWARD A JUST PEACE. THE PAPERS ALSO REPORTED UN SECRETARY-GENERAL KURT WALDHEIM'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO SYRIA.

7. ISRAEL:

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(A) INFORMATION MINISTER PERES SAID AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, MAY 29, THAT NO ONE NOW REGRETS SIGNING THE SEPARATION OF FORCES AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT, WHICH IMPROVED ISRAEL'S POSITION, AND THAT A SIMILAR -CHANGE IN THE ATMOSPHERE" MAY COME AS A RESULT OF THE AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA. HE INSISTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AGREED OUT OF A CLEAR ISRAELI INTEREST, AND THAT IT HAD NOT SOLD OUT SETTLERS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. LIKUD DEPUTIES LAST NIGHT

CRITICIZED THE ACCORD AS JEOPARDIZING GOLAN SETTLEMENTS, FAILING TO ELICIT A SYRIAN PROMISE TO PREVENT FEDAYEEN ATTACKS FROM ITS TERRITORY, AND NEGLECTING THE PLIGHT OF JEWS IN SYRIA. LIKUD WILL TODAY URGE THE KNESSET TO REFUSE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT, ACCORDING TO PRESS

REPORTS FROM JERUSALEM. IN SPITE OF LIKUD'S OPPOSITION, KNESSET APPROVAL OF THE AGREEMENT IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN.

(B) THE INDEPENDENT HA'ARETZ CLAIMED THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AGREEMENT WAS THAT, DESPITE ALL OF ISRAEL'S CONCESSIONS, ITS SECURITY POSITION IS INTACT. HISTADRUT'S DAVAR WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT DESPITE ITS NOT BEING AS GOOD AS THE EGYPTIAN DISENGAGEMENT IN THAT PAPER'S VIEW. THE MAPAM'S AL HAMISHMAR BELIEVED THAT THE AGREEMENT SERVES THE INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES. OF THE MAJOR PAPERS, ONLY THE INDEPENDENT RIGHT-WING YEDIOT AHARONOT WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE AGREEMENT, SAYING THAT ISRAEL WAS THE VICTIM OF A TIRED AND DESPERATE GOVERNMENT AND GROMYKO'S PRESSURE ON KISSINGER TO SUPPORT SYRIAN CONDITIONS.

8. EGYPT:

(A) EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS NOTED THAT THE AGREEMENT OPENED UP THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS ON FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS FROM EGYPTIAN TERRITORY, AND CLEARED THE WAY FOR RESUMPTION OF THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA.

(B) CAIRO RADIO EMPHASIZED PRESIDENT NIXON'S STATEMENT THAT PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE NOW BETTER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN AT ANY TIME OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS. CAIRO RADIO ALSO COMMENTED THAT ARAB POWER IS THE BASIS FOR EVERY AGREEMENT REACHED TO "RETURN ISRAEL TO ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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PLACE." THE BROADCAST REITERATED CAIRO'S PREVIOUS COMMITMENT TO THE INEVITABILITY OF SUCH A DISENGAGEMENT.

(C) AL AKHBAR SAID THAT THE AGREEMENT PAVED THE ROAD FOR THE GENEVA CONFERENCE "AT WHICH ARRANGEMENTS FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL BE MADE." THE PAPER ALSO STRESSED THAT THE DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES IS NOT THE END, NOR A GOAL IN ITSELF, BUT A FIRST STEP TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT.

9. LEBANON:

(A) THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED ITS APPROVAL

OF THE AGREEMENT, BUT INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE ISRAELI MILITARY THREAT TO LEBANON MAY NOW INCREASE, AND THAT TEL AVIV MIGHT BE ABLE TO SOW FURTHER DISSENSION BETWEEN THE LEBANESE AND THE PALESTINIANS.

(B) THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, AS OF EARLY THIS MORNING, STILL HAD NOT RELEASED AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

10. JORDAN: AL URDUN, WHICH USUALLY REFLECTS THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS, SAID THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS NOT THE END OF THE ROAD, BUT A STEP TOWARD COMPREHENSIVE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. SINCE THIS STEP WAS ACHIEVED BY MEANS OF PEACEFUL EFFORTS, OTHER STEPS SHOULD FOLLOW, INCLUDING A DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES ON THE JORDANIAN FRONT.

11. ALGERIA: THE OFFICIAL ALGERIAN NEWS AGENCY EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE DISENGAGEMENT ACCORD WOULD LEAD TO SATISFACTION ON THE MAIN ISSUES, I.E., TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.

12. IRAN: A FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO A LASTING AND HONORABLE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

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